Current
Policy No. 251

Secretary Muskie

Securing a Safe Future

December 4, 1980

United States Department of State
Bureau of Public Affairs
Washington, D.C.

NEWARK PUBLIC LIBRARY
JAN 8 1981
U. S. GOVT. PUBS.
DEPOSITORY 376

Following is an address by Secretary of State Edmund S. Muskie at Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas, December 4, 1980.

During my brief, but intensely rewarding tenure as Secretary of State, I was constantly reminded how the policymaking process—not just in this Administration, but in any Administration—inevitably pulls one toward the short-term perspective.

How should the United States vote, tomorrow, on a critical resolution in the United Nations? What is the appropriate response to a sudden development in Seoul, or in Tehran, or on Capitol Hill? The natural tendency is to address today's problem and to defer tomorrow's. It's one I have struggled against over the past 6 months. I find it difficult to know where I'm headed if my eyes are fixed solely on the ground immediately in front of me.

Today, I want to pursue with you that process of looking ahead—beyond the immediate crises, beyond the imminent transition of power.

What are some of the longer term social, economic, and technological forces at work in our world that will help define not just the next few years but the next decade or more? What do they mean for our own long-term security and well-being? And how will they shape the political choices we will face in the years ahead? To engage in such a look ahead is not to escape the present choices we face but to help illuminate them.

Let me inject a cautionary note at the outset. I suspect that most of you were as enthralled as I by the photographs recently sent back from our Voyager space satellite—by our ability to see, clearly and almost instantly, across billions of miles of space.

Unfortunately, there is no similar technology that enables us to project ourselves across time—to see the future as clearly as we can see the rings of Saturn. National behavior, no less than the human behavior that drives it, remains unpredictable—capable of unexpected new breakthroughs or of dangerous miscalculations.

Nonetheless, there are some trends we can identify—deeper, sometimes less visible economic and social currents that will shape the political landscape over the coming years.

Population Explosion

Each day, there are over 200,000 more mouths to feed in the world, each year, 75 million. By the year 2000, if these present patterns continue, the world will have an additional 1.5 billion inhabitants—an increase in the final quarter of this century that would equal all of the growth in the world's population from the birth of Christ through 1950.

Most of that growth will take place in the developing world. By the year 2000, developing nations will encompass nearly 80% of the world's people. They will be concentrated in increasingly crowded urban areas. The population of

S1.71/4:

Mexico City will exceed 30 million, Calcutta will approach 20 million, Cairo, 17 million. And nearly half of the citizens in developing countries will be under the age of 19.

Our current estimates are that, in the aggregate, world food supplies will continue to grow. But in some poorer areas, the food available per person will decline, and food will be more expensive.

Unless we reverse existing patterns, important resources that are needed to feed and sustain that burgeoning population will continue to disappear. About 1 million acres of prime farmland are converted to urban use each year in the United States. Other farmland is drying into desert—a quarter million acres each year in northern Africa alone. And critical forests—which provide the primary fuel for nearly 2 billion people—are disappearing at the rate of 50 acres a minute.

None of these trends is immutable or irreversible. But they loom on the not-too-distant horizon, gathering clouds we must seek to understand and move to address.

Energy

In one essential aspect of reconciling human needs and global resources, we have made a good beginning in recent years. I speak of our energy future.

It is just a beginning, but it is grounded in an emerging international awareness that the end of the oil era is pressing upon us. Here at home, both our use and our imports of oil are finally going down. Domestic energy production is now going up. And the quest for new, renewable fuels is underway.

But we are by no means out of the woods. The trend is unmistakably in the direction of declining world oil supplies and increasing costs. The entire world faces the difficult transition out of the era of bountiful and inexpensive oil.

As we navigate this passage, the strains on the international economy will continue to be severe. Each time world oil prices rise 10%, world inflation jumps 1%, and overall world growth falls by a half percent. As world growth rates lag—and that is the outlook at least in the near term—the flow of world trade suffers, and competition among trading nations grows more intense.

The economic pressures on the less developed nations during this period of energy transition will be particularly difficult. Those developing nations that import oil have seen their overall oil bill rise 1,500% in the 1970s. Many have had to borrow heavily. Their debt now totals $300 billion. Just to service that debt and pay for their oil imports now costs developing countries half of everything they earn from their exports.

Thus even as we design and build a new energy future—one less reliant on petroleum—the international community, oil exporting nations no less than the importing nations, continue to face the essential task of bringing greater stability to the pricing and the financing of our energy needs.

Spread of Military Technology

With the growing international access to nuclear power has come a greater potential access to the technology of nuclear weapons. Some half-dozen additional nations have the capability to produce a nuclear weapon within 2 years of a decision to do so. That is a chilling fact. Imagine how much more dangerous would be any of the smoldering regional disputes we see in the world if one or both rivals had nuclear weapons.

And the unmistakable direction is toward greater and greater sophistication in the arsenals of the two nuclear superpowers—the United States and the Soviet Union. Greater accuracy and precision in our weapons, increased reliance on mobility and concealment, new military frontiers outside the atmosphere and inside the atom—these new technological vistas will be explored and conquered in the years ahead.

Whether the results of these new developments will be greater security for our people or less, however, depends not on the genius of our advanced scientists but on the wisdom of our political leaders.

International Cooperation

Individually and together, the developments I have mentioned raise a central paradox for the next decade. For the nations of the world to shape their own national futures will require an unprecedented degree of international cooperation. But the very challenges and strains which make that cooperation essential also make it intensely difficult.

None of the developments I have described can be significantly affected unless nations act together to do so.

- Bringing population growth under sensible and humane control will require both international resources and national policies.
- Striking a decent balance between the growing demands of more people for a better life and the single planet which must sustain all life is, by definition, a global enterprise.
- Managing national economies in ways that strengthen the overall health of the international economy rather than undermine it, building a security environment and an enforceable regulatory regime that restrain the spread of nuclear weapons, bringing the strategic arms race under sensible control—all of these essential efforts require a commitment to negotiation and to compromise.

Short-Term Advantages vs. Long-Term Interests

But the same international factors that command cooperation also conspire against that cooperation. Hard times inevitably drive peoples and nations toward preoccupations inward. The natural tendency is to invest attention and effort on protecting one's short-term advantage, even at the expense of the longer term future.

What choice does the subsistence farmer have but to cut whatever firewood is available to cook the family's food regardless of the long-term ecological impact? What incentive is there for parents in an impoverished rural village to limit the number of their children when a larger family can be insurance against an uncertain future?

The same principle applies to nations. We have already seen the temptation to gain short-term national advantages when energy markets are tight, even if it drives up the longer term price. And when growth is slow and unemployment is high—in our nation or in others—pressures mount to protect domestic industries from outside competition, despite the longer term costs to all trading nations from a protectionist spiral.

By the same token, as growing demands for visible improvement in standards of living press in on fragile new

governments, we could see the politics of Third World nations become more tumultuous.

As these internal frustrations are turned outward, the potential for regional rivalries and conflicts increases. And unless a pattern of mutual restraint is established on the part of outside powers, these internal and regional tensions will be a source of growing tension and danger in East-West relations.

In short, we face a period in which nationalistic impulses will be strong. The great challenge—for us and for others—will be to resist short-term expedients that only mortgage our future security and well-being, to take an enlightened, longer term view of our national interests.

Future Choices

What does this mean for our own future and for the choices we face in the years ahead?

Certainly, the next several years must be a time for building America's strength—for investing wisely in a military posture for the remainder of this century that will assure the balance and the stability upon which world peace rests, for regaining control of our energy future, for rejuvenating the productivity and competitiveness of the American economy.

But in the process of building our strength we, too, must resist the temptation to turn inward, to see unilateral solutions to problems that can only be solved through common action, to place barricades around our economy and ring our diplomacy with steel.

We must be deeply conscious, in the years ahead, of the constant need to balance the determined pursuit of our safety and prosperity in the short run with a willingness to cooperate and compromise in pursuit of long-term interests we share with others.

There is no question that we face a period in which our own increased defense efforts are required. Soviet military power has increased steadily and significantly over the past decade. It would be highly dangerous for us to permit the global military balance to tilt in the Soviets' favor.

But even as we modernize our own military capabilities, even as we maintain our staunch opposition to Soviet military adventures in Afghanistan and elsewhere, we must continue the quest for practical, achievable, equitable agreements that restrain the arms spiral.

Military technology will not stand still while we talk about ways to control it. It will move ahead. Achieving balanced and enforceable restraints will become more difficult.

If we are to keep a handle on this costly and increasingly dangerous competition in strategic weaponry, we must build on the progress already achieved and press for further progress with a sense of urgency.

A balance between short-term needs and longer term interests must also be maintained in the area of trade. We must insist that the rules of international trade be fair for American workers and American industries. There will be situations in which temporary assistance to distressed industries will be necessary and appropriate. And we must be constantly sensitive to the immediate problems faced by workers and communities and companies disrupted by shifting patterns of world trade.

But if our response to a generally more competitive trading environment is to erect artificial barriers to an open trading system, we will only suffer in the long run.

We are a nation that thrives on world trade. One out of seven jobs in manufacturing alone depends on our exports. One acre of U.S. farmland of every three produces for exports.

If others cannot sell to us, it inevitably becomes more difficult for us to sell to others. Protectionist answers drive our economy down and our inflation up. For the sake of our future prosperity, we must strive to make our own economy more competitive while keeping the international economy open to fair competition.

The same balance between short- and long-run interests will also be required in the pursuit of a more stable and peaceful world.

- We must be prepared to defend our vital interests if they are endangered. We must be willing and able to meet the legitimate defense needs of friends threatened by external pressures. And there will be security interests that require our continued relationship with governments that are unpopular with their own people. But we must also recognize that our security over the longer term is best assured if, working together with others, we are effective in addressing the conditions that breed instability and conflict.
- We must continue to be an active force for the peaceful resolution of potentially explosive regional disputes—in the Middle East, in southern Africa, in Central America, and elsewhere.
- We must invest in the economic progress of developing nations because it will contribute to our own progress and because hopelessness and frustration are the combustible ingredients for violence and extremism.
- We must continue to press for progress on human rights, encouraging the growth of political and economic institutions that can accommodate to change peacefully and that rest on the solid foundation of popular consent.
- Finally, there is one other balancing act implicit in all the others—reconciling the need for a tightened national budget with the need for greater resources to advance our international interests.

The United States now ranks 15th among the 17 major industrial countries in the amount we spend per capita on international assistance. No programs have a narrower constituency among the American people and in Congress.

But we must come to recognize that helping to plant new forests in Africa, assisting small farmers in the Caribbean grow more food, aiding postwar reconstruction and reconciliation in Zimbabwe and Nicaragua, contributing to the ability of our friends in Southeast Asia to defend themselves from outside threats—these efforts are not "give-away" programs; they are not international charity. They are investments we make in our own future no less than the futures of others.

All of the trends I have spoken of today are real, whether we like them or not. But all of them are the work of human beings. And all of them can be harnessed and controlled by human beings, if we have the will and the skill to blend with our current preoccupations a determination to secure a safer future. ■

Published by the United States Department of State • Bureau of Public Affairs • Office of Public Communication • Editorial Division • Washington, D.C. • December 1980 • Editor: Norman Howard • This material is in the public domain and may be reproduced without permission; citation of this source would be appreciated.

best copy available READEX FICHE

Bureau of Public Affairs
United States Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Official Business

If address is incorrect
please indicate change.
Do not cover or destroy
this address label.

Postage and Fees Paid
Department of State
STA-501